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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the study and practice of academic fund raising, reviewing the major trends in both the scholarly and professional literature and summarizing recent research on the topic. It considers the history of academic fund raising, institutional advancement, and the psychology of giving, discussing research that looks at the social and individual factors that affect fund raising and philanthropy. It then examines research on fund raising systems and practices, as well as the individuals who work at raising funds for academic institutions. Finally, the paper outlines four goals for further research on academic fundraising. Such research needs to: (1) develop more theoretical bases for predicting and understanding individual giving; (2) define and outline the responsibilities, tasks, and challenges of fund raising offices; (3) define measures or criteria for determining fund raising effectiveness; and (4) gain acceptance by the academic community as a serious avenue of inquiry. (Contains 33 references.) (MDM)

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Overview of Literature Related to the Study and Practice of Academic Fund Raising

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Abstract

The current discussion focuses on the existing body of knowledge and literature related to fund raising in higher education. While this effort is by no means definitive, a description of the historical evolution of fund raising is presented, followed by an overview of reasons people give, systems which encourage and facilitate fund raising, and the professionals who make fund raising possible. The discussion ends with recommendations for further research and a plea for greater acceptance by the academic community to seriously considered not just philanthropy, but the actions involved in fund raising for higher education.

Introduction

Fund raising within higher education has taken on increased importance as colleges and universities work with fewer state and federal resources. In addition to reduced revenues, many higher education institutions have also faced rising costs in student services and business operations. Immediate cost center projects ranging from Americans with Disabilities Act compliance to delayed capital construction and repairs have also helped cause the current crisis in financing higher education. The result has been both the redirection and restructuring of budgeting practices and reliance on alternative revenue sources. One of the primary alternative revenue sources identified and utilized, especially in private higher education, has been fund raising (McAvley, 1984; Dunn & Hutten, 1985; Miller, 1993).

Academic fund raising, growing in both institutional importance and actual contributions has taken a leadership role in institutional advancement and development. Fund raising programs have taken on such great importance that they now play a vital role in institutional planning and financing. Such topics as endowment management, capital campaign planning, and development officer training and evaluation guidelines have all arisen in academic circles as areas in need of greater administrative attention.

The purpose for conducting this literature review was to (1) identify major trends in both the scholarly and professional literature related to fund raising, and (2) provide a summation

of existing major research in the hope of providing a departure point for further study. While the nature of academic fund raising has been primarily practitioner oriented, this second purpose will prove to be especially beneficial to developing a conceptual groundwork for expanding development-related research.

History of Fund Raising

The study of fund raising has been the subject of increased scholarly attention, as evidenced by the growing volumes of academic research on the topic (Miller, 1991). One area which has been slower than others to evolve, however, has been the development of a comprehensive background or history of fund raising and alumni relations in education (Goldin, 1988; Maxwell, 1965). A number of authors have divided the history of fund raising into several phases, such as early beginnings, a formative era, the difficulties encountered in fund raising's evolution, and a recent emphasis on technological innovations (Miller, 1993).

The history of fund raising can be traced to the earliest recorded beginnings of civilization, as a sense of "community" encouraged individuals to work together to solve common problems. In ancient Egypt, for example, giving of personal resources was common in an effort to sustain and improve culture and perpetuate religion (Wood, 1989). Giving practices in Europe took the form of in-kind contributions (Haskins, 1957), and gradually became

common-place in developing educational institutions (Rashdall, 1936).

In North America, the idea of philanthropy was imported as an extension of the religions of Europe (Curti & Nash, 1965). Parishioners were commonly asked for contributions to keep the church operating, and these same types of requests were made for colleges and universities (Curti & Nash, 1965). Also during the Colonial Period, colleges and universities moved to the forefront of fund raising practices by developing alumni societies which would both participate in governance and serve as a form of primitive 'data-base' of potential donors (Maxwell, 1965).

During the 1800's, both higher education institutions and non-profit agencies flourished in the race for philanthropic dollars (Hans, 1983). This competition for charitable dollars allowed for not only an improvement in the techniques of fund raising, but also forced the issue of donors controlling contributed funds and directing how they were spent to be dealt with by college administrators. The issue of donor responsibility and influence has been illustrated in a very practical sense in education, where donors realized a direct control of curricular issues, proportionate to the size of their contribution (Stover, 1930). Andrew Carnegie and John Rockefeller, for example, were noted for using their contributions to dictate various administrative functions of the agencies they chose to give to, and this resulted in a more business-like approach to the raising of money (Goldin, 1988).

Most recently, fund raising has been in a period of definition and refinement, focusing attention on improving techniques and regulating efforts to assure ethical and legitimate practices in fund raising (Breslow, 1988). While the current stage of fund raising has been described as "professionalism" (Korvas, 1984), current issues have focused, at times, on legislation (Schiff, 1989), and ethical behavior (Linsely, 1989).

Psychology of Giving

Individuals participate in philanthropy for different reasons, and choose to support various charities for a constellation of purposes. Douglas (1983) claimed that the entire philanthropic community has arisen from the unique demands placed on individuals by market economics and democratic politics. Further, philanthropic organizations have been so successful and have grown so rapidly because they fill a void in governmental social programs, and respond to personal rather than organizational needs (Douglas, 1983; Marts, 1966).

The psychology of donors may mirror that of non-profit agency growth, however; individual responses to "needs" has been studied as a world unto itself. Lord (1984), for example, spelled out that organizations do not have needs, but rather, people and causes do have needs that must be fulfilled. Subsequently, people support charities and philanthropic organizations because they fill a void or promise to solve a

problem for an individual. Some researchers (Leslie & Ramey, 1985) have found that when social needs are greater, as evidenced by poor business conditions, individual giving increases. Conversely, corporate giving has increased when economic conditions are more favorable, clarifying the idea that giving is not always spurred solely by feelings of goodwill or altruism, but can be inspired by the availability of resources.

Within the context of higher education, many aspects of student life and the undergraduate experience have been studied. Fraternity involvement (Tyus, 1958), housing status and use of student life resources (Caruthers, 1971), extra- or co-curricular involvement (Miller & Casebeer, 1991), and religious and parental oversight have all been related to alumni support. In general, graduates who were involved in the life or culture of their alma mater have been found to be more likely to participate in alumni events or activities and giving.

Fund Raising Systems

As fund raising practices have grown in sophistication, there has been an increased effort to monitor and develop the systems and structures of fund raising offices. As Rowland (1977) outlined, the institutional advancement program consists of a multi-faceted approach to constituent relations which addresses not only the alumni population, but also students, government agencies and governing bodies, the local community, and business, industry, and corporate America. Rowland stressed

that each advancement program will maintain a certain degree of uniqueness based on the institution's peculiar "Groove of Academe."

Stuhr (1985) alternatively focused on what the advancement program should be emphasizing, not necessarily on divisions within an office. Stuhr stressed the articulation of institutional aims, forming a development program, recruiting, training, and serving volunteers, identifying, cultivating, and soliciting major gifts, and the professional development of staff members. Battillo and Villanti (1986) provided an extension of this thinking by placing programmatic quality on the ability to attract and maintain high quality volunteers. The challenge to the development system, then, is one in which volunteers are placed in some high priority position, and are cultivated and regarded in a fashion consistent with institutional goals or missions.

A similar system was proposed by Miller and Newman (1993) in which volunteers, donors, and potential donors are placed in a "communication loop." This loop, they contended, comprised a series of communication encounters where the organization has the potential to convey messages to the volunteers and donors, while simultaneously providing opportunities for volunteer and donor input.

Fund Raising Professionals

The fund raising professional has received a great deal of attention in literature, from the perspective of scholars, practitioners, and often, search firm recruiters. Brod (1986) identified thirteen characteristics to look for in an effective fund raiser, listing such qualities as motivation, integrity, knowledge of self, maturity, and commitment. Alternatively, Burdette (1987) made the case for concentrating on finding a fund raising professional who is committed primarily to the cause of the organization. Duronio (1994) reported that approximately half of the fund raising professionals she surveyed saw themselves as equally committed to the profession of fund raising and the organization which employs them.

Bila (1991) reported that many current Certified Fund Raising Executives rely on the institution or organization to hire them, and that over a third believed that they obtained their position by being nominated by a professional colleague. Few fund raising executives, he found, had obtained their position through executive search firms. McClellan and Pellegrino (1990) reported that in hospital fund raising, the average fund raiser's tenure was about 23 months. Miller (1991) reported that fund raisers in higher education were primarily task oriented, a concept advanced by Nicols (1987) who claimed that a "decision planner" who is active and supportive of volunteers will be effective.

As for the effectiveness of a fund raising executive, Willard (1984) wrote:

> The research concluded that personal characteristics, except advancement experience, considered important in the literature of the field for 25 years, have no bearing on whether or not a chief development officer is effective. It was further concluded that there are no specific characteristics, beyond advancement experience, which serve as a guide for hiring and evaluating a chief development officer (p. iv.).

This claim of ambiguity in predicting effectiveness or success by a fund raising executive has also been advanced by Burdette (1987), Brakeley (1980), and Miller (1991).

Discussion

Fund raising activities play an important role in the success and activity of higher education institutions. Considered the mechanism which allows for a "margin of excellence," fund raising stimulates revenue production, public support, and allows for supporters to voice their opinions and beliefs about the institution. Additionally, as the presented literature demonstrates, some effort has been directed as examining the role, functions, and ingredients of the fund raising process; those which aid in success and those which serve as a barrier to financial support. Specifically, each area

described within the current discussion holds a special consequence for the future of fund raising.

The history of higher education, as alluded to in the first part of this discussion, has been the subject of significant study. Many of the landmark works on the history of higher education, however, give only superficial treatment to the role of fund raising and alumni support in developing the current structure of higher education.

The psychology of individual in financially supporting their alma mater or other higher education institution have also been treated lightly in research and the literature as a whole. While conceptual discussions are presented by practitioners about the reasons individuals choose to give, few scholarly efforts are directed at creating a model or theoretical framework for understanding giving. Suggested, however, is a reference to the "funnel of causality" which dictates varying levels of refinement and screening in making decisions. To date, however, existing research fails to adequately give credence to this allusion.

Institutional systems of fund raising reviewed here were diverse, yet had apparently moved away from the debate about control of data bases and alumni population contact. Literature described the primary focus of the successful advancement or fund raising office as one which holds a holistic view to the advancement of the institution as a whole, and not separate agendas within the division, department, or office. The issues of programmatic effectiveness and quality were addressed

somewhat, but the overall emphasis was on open lines of communication with internal and external constituencies.

Fund raising professionals or executives appeared to be advancing in both their training and sophistication. More dated literature reveals a view of fund raisers related to knowledge of the institution, and this has apparently given way to finding individuals committed to the cause of the organization. Additional evidence of sophistication is apparent in the discussion of evaluating fund raisers, and searching for objective criteria for assessing whether the individual has done the job of raising money well. In this attempt to move beyond the amount of money raised, there may well be room for use of portfolios or other authentic tools to assessing position or career performance.

The results of this overview provide the bases for at least four evident recommendations for further research. First, a more theoretical bases for predicting and understanding individual giving is needed. If fund raising programs are to move away from a "hit and miss" practice, correlations must be drawn between set criteria and the behavior of giving. The aforementioned funnel of causality may well conceptually fit into the process of identifying donor behaviors, but this must be more firmly entrenched in sociological and psychological theory.

Second, much needs to be done to define and outline the responsibilities, tasks, and challenges of fund raising offices, and the strategies which are used to cope with the diverse

challenges. Efforts need to be taken by those in research to better understand the organizational behavior of fund raising offices, and how these behaviors change, alter, or respond to institutional directives, crises, and planning. Similarly, the third area in need of research is on the challenges and training of fund raising professionals. For these individuals to continue to excel, they must be studied in relation to the entire institution, and how they respond to various stimulus within the institution. Additionally, external factors such as public perception, career advancement, and commitment to professional growth are topics in need of attention.

The combined areas of systems and professionals also need a great deal of scholarly attention to more effectively define measures or criteria for determining effectiveness. Much of the work currently done on evaluating and assessing learning may well be applicable to these individuals and programs, particularly the use of portfolios and other authentic assessment strategies.

Finally, perhaps the greatest challenge to the study of fund raising is acceptance by the academic community. Curriculum development and testing for volunteers and professionals, understanding organizational behavior, and alumni behavior are all topics which can be addressed by the academic community, but relatively little is done in professional education to encourage the bridging of professions for mutual advancement. Mechanisms such as research grants and scholarly journals carry the potential to create an effective, critical, and open dialogue

about the relationship between the two groups, and the direction research must take to be applicable to practitioners as well as rewarding for those in the academy.

The current discussion was fashioned to serve as a departure point for further research and discussion. Although only a fraction of the available literature available was presented for discussion, a clear picture of the challenges and diversity of the occupation and practice of fund raising was accurately presented. Only through a more active scholar-practitioner dialogue can the existing body of literature move beyond its current descriptive nature, and effectively serve as a tool for bettering the environment of higher education.

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